

**Amendments to the Specification**

**Please replace paragraph [01] at page 1, lines 1-5 with the following replacement paragraph:**

[01] This application claims the benefit of priority of Provisional Application No. 60/217,910, filed on July 13, 2000, and is related by subject matter to U.S. Patent Application No. ~~TBA~~ 09/902,944 filed July 12, 2001, entitled "Method For Operating Transparent Node For WDM Shared "Virtual Ring" Networks", by the inventors of the present application filed concurrently herewith.